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ABSTRACT

This document contains abstracts of 46 presentations from the first Warwick International Early Years Conference. Presentations included discussions of research studies, program descriptions, and opinion papers on a variety of topics pertaining to child development and early childhood education. Topics covered include: (1) cross-cultural comparisons of early years programs; (2) early childhood communicative competence; (3) EDUCARE programs; (4) adolescent mothers; (5) play; (6) parent child relationships; (7) early childhood program evaluation; (8) early childhood teacher concerns; (9) computers in early childhood classes; (10) adjustment to school; (11) child interactions and interpersonal relationships; and (12) early years curriculum. (AP)

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building bridges

International Collaboration
in the 1990's

ABSTRACTS

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BUILDING BRIDGES: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE 1990S

The First Warwick International Early Years Conference

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RESEARCHNET PRESENTATION

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VALUES AND PRACTICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN CHINA AND UNITED STATES

Dr Doris Bergen, (Director)
Dr Blythe Hinitz, Dr Marci Guddemi, Dr Toni Stiefer & Dr Johnetta Morrison

Although early childhood (early years) educators in many parts of the world seem to hold some common educational values, there are also many variations in the design of the educational settings, teacher and child expectations, and curricular goals in programs for young children in various countries. This is not suprising because goals and practices of early childhood education are affected by the values of the larger society. The competencies that are judged to be essential for adult success in a society are stressed in both childrearing and educational practices (Ogbu, 1981). The purpose of this presentation is to make explicit the similarities and differences in early childhood values and practices in two regions of the world: China (in Shanghai and Dalian, PRC, and Taipei, Taiwan, ROC) and the eastern/southern United States (In New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Florida). As part of an ongoing research network, early childhood educators in these geographical areas participated in a study of the views and practices of early childhood teachers, administrators, teacher trainers, and students-in-training. The instrument and methodology used in all studies were the same, based on a 1989 study by the research network director This panel presentation will include a general overview of the study design and interview questions, a report on and comparison of the major value and practice positions of the respondents in China and the United States, and a discussion of possible reasons for the differences and similarities. The engagement of the audience in exploring the reported value and practice dimensions, and sharing their experiences in these or other countries will be sought. Members of the audience will be encouraged to join the network and to engage in further study of these value and practice questions along with the presenters and the other current members of the network.

Reference

Ogbu, J. (1981) Origins of human competence. A cultural-ecological perspective. Child Development, 52, 413-429.

A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTIONPROGRAMS

Workshop given by: Dr Paul Vedder, State University Leiden &
Toon Pennings, Averroes Foundation Amsterdam

The Averroes Foundation in Amsterdam, the Netherlands is responsible for the development and improvement of two Intervention programs, designed to support immigrant parents in educating their children age 2-4 years (Opstapje) and age 4-6 years (Opstap). In order to do so, we have developed a monitoring system, aimed at fulfilling the increasing need for information of the organization itself and possible external requests for information from governmental, municipal and scientific organizations.

In the past year we have explored the feasibility and possibility of developing a home-made information system adapted to the need of the funding institutes, the workers in the field, here called 'program co-ordinators', as well as the need of the Opstap-management.

In our workshop we would like to present the fully computerized monitoring system as we've designed it for decentralized operation and which is now being implemented on a small, experimental scale.

The content of our presentation will be focussed on issues related to developing a monitoring system for educational family-programs, and will survey the problems we have met, the choices we've made and, finally, the solutions we have found during this process. Our experiences with the implementation of the system until now will be part of the presentation. We will also present the results of a study on Opstap during the experiment in the years 1987-1991 by the State University of Leiden in relation to our monitoring system.

After our presentation participants will have ample opportunity to work with the monitoring system, and to discuss with us the functioning of it.

The workshop might be interesting and useful for college-institutes who are thinking about designing a (computerized) monitoring system for their own programs, as well as for those who already have set up a comparable monitoring system and like to exchange knowledge and experiences with us.

CURRICULUM IN MOTION: FACILITATING EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH FUNCTIONAL, MEANINGFUL AND PURPOSEFUL INTERACTIONS

Professor Judith S Amatangelo, Orlando, Florida, USA

The 'My Turn' Curriculum: A Comprehensive and Integrated Pragmatic Approach to Language Growth and Development will be presented with an overview of current research methodologies in support of developmentally appropriate curricular activities for the four year old and the five year old child.

The curriculum was devised over a period of three years with continual research and has been piloted in four countries in the State of Florida in both regular and special needs early childhood programs. Research results indicated significant gains in language growth and production. The curriculum consists of innovative techniques, themes and multicultural components to enhance the creative development, cognitive development and language acquisition of children with a central part of these strategies and techniques dealing with spontaneous social and dramatic play, creative movement, music (including 45 original songs) and exposure to a variety of literary types. A strong parent component is also inclusive to enhance the parent's awareness of their child's developmental needs and to provide suggestions for parent-child interactive activities and exploratory play in the home environment.

Through the utilization of the curricular methods discussed during this presentation, facilitation of the following goals may be obtained:

That the child:

a) learn to be with and interact with other children, teachers and parents,
b) develop an interest and curiosity, an inquisitiveness to learn,
c) experience daily success through the exploration of his/her environment,
d) unfold feelings and daily experiences through self-expression and,
e) increase and develop responsibility.

ADULT-CHILDREN INTERACTIONS IN INFANT SCHOOLS

C. Angel, M. Bigas, R. Carrio & B. Moll
Seccio Pre-escolar, Escola de Mestres, Universitate Autonoma de Barcelona, Spain
Assessor: Profess H R Schaffer, Strathclyde University, U.K.

This paper intends to study adult incidence in non-verbal and verbal children interaction in the context of infant school education. It is interesting to know how the educator can promote interactions between children, both in verbal and non-verbal communication.

Our theoretical background is based on the studies made by Professor H R Schaffer and M. Stamback concerning small children's interaction between one another and with adults. Our specific aim has been to study the different types of verbal and non-verbal communication that children between 2 and 4 years of age carry out in the kindergarten and nursery-school, in four different situations.

A. The teacher interacts with a single child in a dyadic situation teacher-child
B. The teacher interacts with the child whose communicational behaviour is being observed, when he/she is in a group.
C. The teacher interacts with other children from the same group that the child being observed belongs to.
D The teacher does not interact with the child being observed.

The study focuses on the communicational behaviour of fifteen 2-year-olds from three nurseries belonging to "Patronat Municipal de Guarderies de Barcelona" and fifteen 4-year-olds from two kindergartens.

We have been making direct observations in the classroom, videotaping the teachers for a total of 5 minutes, while engaged in different types of activities.

To analyse the data, we have set some categories concerning: verbal and non-verbal interactions, interlocutor, social participation behaviour.

A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARE INTERVENTION IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Eric Atmore, Grassroots Educare Trust, Gatesville, South Africa

The importance of intervention in the early years for children from lower socio-economic, disadvantaged communities is widely acknowledged. Many intervention programmes have, however, focussed on the cognitive development of children and on school readiness and have marginalised health care, nutrition and community development.

A community development approach to providing educare services within disadvantaged communities based on action research has been developed in South Africa. This intervention strategy is premised on the view that early education and care in disadvantaged communities must have a wider focus than simply the child and must include parents and the local community. Besides the education focus services should provide for the health care, nutrition and welfare of children.

Educare provision can also play a facilitating role in empowering communities and more particularly empowering women; it can be a catalyst for the development of individuals and groups; a stimulus for personal growth; and for the mobilization of communities towards obtaining basic services such as housing, sanitation, water supply and community infrastructure.

This developmental perspective has as its aim the development of children and the improvement of the quality of community life. Young children provide a rallying point for mobilising community action and resources. Children's needs are met in an integrated way; the community benefits through gaining knowledge and acquiring skills; and income generating employment opportunities are created by having a range of programmes based on community need.

In this presentation the experiences of non-governmental early childhood educare organisations in South Africa which use this approach will be drawn upon.

FOLLOW-UP RESEARCH OF A TURKISH HOME BASED EARLY ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME

Dr Sevda Bekman, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

The paper presents a follow-up research of a home based early enrichment programme which is an example of a contextual model with a "whole child" approach. The programme was carried out within the context of a Turkish Early Enrichment Project which aimed to study the impact of both center based and home based early childhood care and education on the overall development of the child. The home based intervention programme illustrates an alternative model to centre based programmes and introduces the mother as the educator of her child. The programme has two main elements directed at a) fostering the cognitive development of the child (HIPPY) and b) sensitizing the mothers to various developmental needs of the child. The original research was carried out between 1982 - 1986 with 225 children of 3 and 5 years of age. In the first year of the study thorough assessments were used to assess the overall development of the child. In the second and fourth year reassessments were carried out to establish both pre-post and home intervention non-home intervention comparisons. Five years after the completion of this longitudinal study follow up data has been collected from 217 of the subjects; among these 83 subjects have received the home intervention programme. Both short and long term results supported the expectation that an intervention programme which starts in early years and targets the child's immediate environment has positive effects on achievement. It also provides a better quality of interaction between family members and child, better family adjustment and a better perception of the child by the parents, all of which indicate a more supportive and a stimulating environment.

WORKING WITH ADOLESCENT MOTHERS OF BABIES AND TODDLERS: ONE APPROACH

Jennifer Birckmayer, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA

Adolescent mothers and their very young children are a high-risk group, physically, emotionally and socially. These very young parents present special challenges to the early childhood educator, who must often deal with the simultaneous demands created by an immature adolescent and the needs of her child for responsible parenting. Social isolation, lack of education, inexperience, and un-met needs to play further complicate the lives of teen parents, and of educators who attempt to teach them parenting skills.

Recognising the adolescent needs of very young parents and building a parent education program based on concrete, playful experiences with plentiful opportunities to interact with peers seem to be keys to successful intervention. In this presentation we will look at the special characteristics of adolescent parents and review a series of field-tested hands-on parent education workshop for them.

SEEING PLAY FOR WHAT IT IS: PARENTS AND PROFESSIONAL WORKERS TOGETHER

Tina Bruce, Hammersmith, London

Play is an umbrella word, which causes a serious lack of agreed focus. Amongst early childhood workers, play is regarded as of central importance. In contrast, parents and those outside this specialist field often regard it as recreation without contributing to the learning process.

One way forward is to abandon the word altogether, and so side step confusion. It is probably more fruitful for early childhood workers, in close partnership with parents and carers to analyse and clarify the term, to see play for what it is, and its place in contributing to the network for learning.

The British Industrial Society's model advises a three stranded approach, including emphasis on the task - more refined agreement about the contribution of play to the network for learning, the individual - those working with young children and their families should each take action to address this challenge through in-depth study of play, which is regarded as of central importance in the field, but which has a tendency to mean all things to all people. The third, and essential strand is the team - close partnership with parents and carers, together with dissemination of the contribution of play to the network for learning to the public at large, and politicians in particular.

Theories of play abound, but they can be studied in two main categories. These are, play versus work, and play as education. The latter can be subdivided into the preparation for life approach, and play as an integrating mechanism. This paper will concentrate on the latter, proposing a network of learning which include the importance of first hand experience through struggling, manipulating, exploring, discovering, and practising, as well as games, humour, representation of experience and play itself.

THE DYNAMICS OF PATTERNS OF CHILD-PARENTS INTERACTION DURING THE SENSITIVE PERIODS OF CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Dr Anna Brzezinska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland

The course of child's development is not a simple one; we may distinguish some particular periods of changes of a great importance from the point of view of future child's develoment. Erikson called these periods "Psychosocial crises". Vygotski spoke about "critical moments". Generally one is pointed to three important moments ie 3, 5 and 7 year of child's life. During these critical periods the relation between Psyche-Soma-Polis radically transforms and the child becomes ready to acquire new cognitive and social competencies. These periods are treated as difficult both for the child and for his/her parents too. Our hypothesis is that according to changes in the child's behaviours (and tranformations in his/her mental life) changes in the behaviour of parents occur also. So as consequence the pattern of child-parent interaction radically transforms. Changes are connected with the kind of quality of personal input of the child and the parent, with the self-involvement of two partners, with the quality of reciprocity and mutuality. The main empirical questions are: (1) What are the patterns of child-parent interaction during the critical periods of child's life? (2) Are there any significant differences between these patterns for the dyads: mother - daughter, mother - son, father - daughter and father - son? (3) What is the dynamics of transformation of interaction patterns during the preschool age? Our subjects are children 3;0 - 6;11 years old (in six aging groups, i.e. 6 x 10 = 60 children) and the parents (mothers and fathers). We use three techniques: review with the rating scales for parents, analysis of children's drawings and analysis of video tapes (in three different situations for child - mother and child - father interaction). Results are analysed with ANOVA. The main indepedent variables are child's age, child's sex, parent's sex and the dependent variables are the seven indices of the quality of child-parent interaction.

THE ASSURANCE AUDIT PROCESS: AN EVALUATION PROCEDURE FOR QUALITY CONTROL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES IN NEW ZEALAND

Valerie Burns, Education Review Office, New Zealand

The impact of the 1989 education administrative reforms affected all early childhood care and education services in New Zealand. It resulted in the application of uniform standard Government policies and procedures, regardless of the services' diverse origins, philosophies or practices. This has caused anxiety and concern that each service may lose its distinctiveness. To date this fear is not confirmed in practice, even though the central controls are more specific and require compliance on a core of common components, relating to curriculum, management and the environment.

This paper examines the key centralized quality control mechanism, the assurance audit. It backgrounds the development of the process as part of the restructuring of the New Zealand public service. It outlines the procedure, provides some findings from initial results and briefly critiques some issues.

DEVELOPING NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM GUIDELINES: A NEW ZEALAND CASE STUDY

Presenter: Margaret Carr
Authors: Margaret Carr and Helen May, Private Bag 3042, New Zealand

In 1992 the authors were contracted by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand to write national Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines for early childhood services for children aged 0-4 years. This paper charts the philosophical and consultative path for this process. Of international interest are the decisions that were made along the way, decisions for example to do with

* whether a national curriculum can reflect the diversity of programmes in the field and still be worthwhile,
* whether a national curriculum can contribute to professional development and quality care and education for children,
* the extent to which a *national* curriculum is possible, and how uniquely national and cultural issues can be addressed,
* how to link an early childhood curriculum to a school curriculum and still retain its integrity and uniquely early childhood philosophy,
* whether it is possible to include all age groups from zero to four in the one curriculum,
* how the issues to do with 'utilitarian' and 'developmental' curriculum can be met,
* how assessment and evaluation can be integrated into the curriculum,
* finding a model of curriculum that adequately considers the role of content and process, goals for children and developmentally appropriate practice by adults.

TEACHING UNDER PRESSURE

Anne Cockburn, University of East Anglia, Norwich

Early years teaching has always been demanding and yet, in recent years, there has been an unprecedented amount of stress among the profession in several western countries (Farber, 1991; Johnstone, 1989). To a certain extent the origins are fairly easy to identify in England and Wales (e.g. the introduction of the National Curriculum and assessment; teacher appraisal; lack of consultation and low public opinion). The causes may be specific but the effects of change and low status are far more universal. Innovations and a general decline in morale and self-esteem, for example, all have the capacity to induce a considerable amount of negative stress (e.g. Byrne, 1992; Claxton, 1989; Farber, 1991; Ruddock, 1991). Financially the cost is high in terms of days lost through absenteeism, insurance and other related expenses (Cottrell, 1992). Educationally the cost is potentially far higher.

This paper examines the extent of the problem among teachers of young children. It explores some of the underlying reasons for stress within the profession in terms of the complexity of schools and schooling; teachers' personalities; the pressures upon them and the effects of recent changes in education. The data are based on questionnaires and clinical interviews with trainee, beginning and experienced teachers (N = 90).

By way of conclusion, realistic ways for teachers to ameliorate their stress and enhance their lifestyles will be discussed.

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SEEKING THE VIEWS, WISHES AND FEELINGS OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN EDUCARE SETTINGS IN THE UK AND BELGIUM

Tricia David, Warwick University, Department of Education, UK

In research, as in legal circles, 'the voice of the child' is at least being given greater credibility than in the part. The UN Convention on Children's Rights, the European Charter of Human Rights and attitudes in partner countries in Europe, are all likely to have had an influence on the UK's Children Act 1989, in which the requirement that the child's wishes be taken into account is enshrined. The movement towards recognition for children as people (not chattels) has also highlighted the fact that not only has there been a gap in the type of statistics collected by social and economic researchers, there has been a gap, only recently being addressed, in a sociology of childhood.

This paper, based on research for a Nuffield-funded project in Belgium and the UK, will explore two strands connected with research strategy involving interviewing children of nursery school age.

Firstly, the paper will review the issues raised by the strategy itself as a research tool, and particularly for a researcher using a second language, one in which she is likely to be less skilled than the interviewees.

Secondly, the paper will debate the progress of 'children as citizens' in terms of children's views, wishes and feelings being taken into account in early childhood settings in the two research-focus countries, and the interpretations of this in practice.

THE EFFECTS OF GENDER, ATTENDANCE PERIOD AND AGE ON CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT TO NURSERY CLASSES

Julie Davies, University of Manchester, U.K.

This paper analyses the effects of gender, attendance period and age on children's adjustment to nursery classes as measured by the teachers using the Child at School Schedule. The sample consisted of 778 children in sixteen nursery classes attached to primary schools in one Local Authority. The results of a two-way analysis of variance showed that boys were perceived to be less well-adjusted to school than girls (at F 1% level) and the afternoon attenders less well-adjusted to school than the morning attenders (at F 1% level). The results are discussed in the light of other studies which indicate that boys settle with greater difficulty into school than girls and the effect that parental choice of session has on the composition of the two groups. Strategies to help boys and afternoon attenders to experience as positive a start to nursery education as girls and morning attenders are discussed. The key role of the adults in helping children to develop personal and social skills is highlighted as is the need for home/school partnership. The implication of gender for play and classroom organisation are also considered.

TALKING AND LEARNING IN PAIRS: A COMPARISON OF TWO INTERACTIVE MODES FOR SIX AND SEVEN YEAR OLD PUPILS

Nick Dowrick, Edge Hill College of Higher Education, Ormskirk, Lancashire, U.K.

This paper argued that standard models of collaborative peer interaction, employed successfully with older pupils, may be less appropriate for six and seven year olds. It draws upon theories of play and upon United States research to propose that associative interaction may be a more suitable model.

An exploratory study was made of 26 pupils, working in pairs at a series of tasks involving the completion and modelling of simple number sentences. They interacted in an associative mode, in which they observed and discussed each other's simultaneous responses to identical tasks, and in a collaborative mode in which they produced joint responses. 20 hours of interaction were recorded.

High order talk was more frequent in the associative mode, principally as a result of more frequent and closely monitored disagreement. Task performances were little different in the two modes, but post-tested progress appeared to be greater after associative interaction. This could not simply be attributed to the greater frequency of high order talk, however, since no relationship was found between such talk and post-test progress; unlike in other studies, no beneficial effect was found for giving explanations to a partner. Discussion often seemed to symptomise rather than cure difficulties, and pupils avoided protracted disagreement. Non verbal means are therefore suggested to have mediated relationships between interaction and post-test progress. Associative interaction appeared to be particularly advantageous for lower attaining dyads, who struggled to cope with the demands of collaboration, and at the simpler tasks, at which partners could interact with more understanding and confidence.

Associative interaction is concluded to merit further investigation, and possible relationships between it and cognitive and concept development are discussed. Suggestions are made for how both associative and collaborative interaction might be enhanced in practice.

PROJECT PEACE
(Parent Education and Child Enrichment)

Dr Anne Federlein, Regent's Center for Early Developmental Education, University of Northern Iowa

Many parents are young and poor; have experienced abuse or neglect in their own childhoods; and/or are living chaotic, socially isolated, and stress-filled lives. They are unable to play the primary parental role. It was recognition of this fact that Project PEACE was established.

The Project is designed to help parents and guardians foster the development of their children under the age of three years. All of the participating families are under-educated, lacking in self-esteem, and living in poverty.

There are three components: family identification and assessment; and educational program for the children and their parents; and teacher training. Parents who have been identified as at-risk (and who are willing) bring their children to school for two three-hour sessions each week. During these times the parents interact with and play with their own children and those of others, under the non-directive supervision of the teacher. The teacher and her assistant model appropriate adult behaviours toward the children in an on-going, natural manner, and have informal discussions about topics suggested by the actual behaviours of the children (and their parents) during their play. The six hours of weekly class time provide an opportunity for parents to interact with their children in a stress-free environment, and these interactions have continued outside of class. Home visits are made every other week.

There have been positive changes. We are finding that a supportive program involving infants, toddlers, and their parents can reduce parental stress, can give parents a sense of empowerment, and results in more appropriate parenting skills and parent-child relationships. The program is also proving to these parents that the institution known as school can be a friendly place, it can be supportive, and it can make a difference.

CHILDREN'S FRIENDSHIPS DURING THEIR FIRST TERM AT SCHOOL: IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTICE

Dr Dorothy Faulkner, University of Warwick
Dr Dorothy Miell, The Open University

This paper reports findings from an exploratory longitudinal study of thirty-seven, 4-5 years-old children throughout their first term of formal schooling in British primary schools. The study examined the impact of early friendships on the children's understanding of the social world of the classroom and their ability to communicate effectively with their peers. Pairs of friends and isolated children were selected for observation on the basis of teacher interviews. These twelve 'target children' were studied intensively using non-participant observational techniques, once a week throughout their first term at school. This allowed systematic coding of samples of their behaviour and language in various activities and settings during the course of the normal school day. Less formal observations of these children's interaction in the classroom, particularly the home corner, was recorded at regular times throughout the term on video tape. Class teachers were interviewed at the beginning and end of term about children's friendship patterns and all thirty-seven children also took part in a communication game with friends and non-friends to assess their communication skills in an experimental context.

In this paper we will present evidence that supports the view that close enduring friendships help foster the development of a number of vital social skills during the early years, such as effective communication, negotiation and being able to see things from the point of view of another person. Development of these skills has been shown to be of vital importance if children's entry into the wider peer culture of the primary school is to be effective. The paper will include a discussion of the findings from the communication game, and also report findings from the observational data which compared the communication strategies of friends and isolates in natural classroom contexts. Finally, the children's own ideas about friendship, obtained using interviews and sociometric techniques, will be presented.

The implications of the findings on friendship and the development of communication skills will be discussed in terms of their implications for grouping and classroom organization during the first term of children's formal schooling.

THE USE OF COMPUTERS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM SETTING: POSITIVE, NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL EXPERIENCE?

Dr Pat Gardner, Santa Monica College, California, USA

The presentation provides an historical perspective of what has happened since the early 1980s with the use of computers in the classroom for young children. A review of the research, anecdotal observations, pictures, and slides of the present scene concerning young children and computers in the classroom would be included. The research involves issues regarding gender disparity, socio-economic status, enhancement of learning, concept development, social emotional welfare, and teacher support.

THE PROCESS PROJECT

Sue Gifford, Froebel College, London

The PROCESS project, published as 'Profiling Recording and Observing' (Routledge 1993) has been developed by Roehampton Institute in conjunction with Merton LEA, beginning in 1989. It offers a system of assessment for 3 to 6 year olds, which is based on cumulative classroom observation and conversations with parents. Observations are freely written, within a structure that encourages staff to look at the whole child and the common learning process across the early years curriculum. It has a strong emphasis on cognitive rather than physical aspects.

Managing to record daily observations in a busy classroom of very young children is one of the most difficult tasks for early years staff to achieve. Staff as well as children have to be considered as whole individuals who work in different ways. Over the last three years, we have made some discoveries about the psychology of managing classroom observation. joining PROCESS has been likened to other behaviour management systems such as joining weight-watchers! We have found that there are three key elements, commitment, structure and built-in flexibility, so that unforeseen demands and different ways of working are catered for.

We are currently developing a summative record. This provokes the interesting question of whether it is possible to provide a qualitive form of baseline assessment, i.e. a record which centres on the whole child, while giving information which interfaces with the National Curriculum.

CREATIVE THINKING AT 5-6 YEARS OLD KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Professor Mubeccel Gonen, Selay Uzmen, Nut Akcin, Nermin Ozdemir

This study was carried out to investigate the effect of age and sex on the creativity of 5 to 6 year old kindergarten children. The total points scored by the 6 year old boys and girls included in this study were found to be higher than those scored by the 5 year olds. No significant difference was found between the points scored by the girls and boys. However, the girls did better in flexibility, originality and elaboration and the boys in fluency criterion of creativity.

Children should be helped at home and school to develop their creative power. To achieve this, art, story-telling, music and drama activities should be an integral part of the school curriculum. During such activities children should be allowed to take their time, and any despostic attitude on the part of the teacher should be avoided. In addition, children should be given a chance with unstructured play materials. Activities should be followed by a discussion with children, who should be taught that things can be done in more ways than one.

DECONSTRUCTING THE TRADITION: FROEBEL, PLAY, ETC.

Dr Peter Jackson, Froebel Institute College, Roehampton Institute, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PJ

In our recent book Educating Young Children: A Structural Approach* Helen McAuley and I queried the widespread assumption by early childhood educators that they are the inheritors of a fortune created by pioneers over two centuries. This legacy is said to give us the aims, values and principles by which to guide present and future policy. It scarcely matters that for some writers the bequest offers clear unequivocal guidelines while for others it is mysterious, yielding its truths only to selective interpretations. For both it has been a kind of holy writ conferring authority.

The question was not pursued in the book because that was concerned with doubts about research and practice rather than the philosophical underpinnings of theory. In this short paper both the tradition and the use to which contemporary writers put it are examined. I conclude that an inheritance of early childhood education theory sufficiently seamless to be invoked as support for modern theory is a fiction. Furthermore the temptation to invoke in the construction of modern theory such names as Pestalozzi, Froebel, Freud, Montessori, etc. should be resisted. As illustrations they are misleading, as supports they are dangerously unsafe.

* Helen McAuley & Peter Jackson (1992) *Education Young Children: A Structural Approach*, London, David Foulton.

CONTINUITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: TRANSITION FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO SCHOOL

Dr Alexandros Kakavoulis, As. Professor of Child Development and Education,
University of Crete, Athens, Greece.

As continuity and discontinuities in all levels of schooling are, on the whole, a crucial psychological and pedagogical problem, transfer from home to a nursery school or entrance to a primary school seem to be most important changes that occur in a child's life. In a series of studies that we have conducted we have traced some of the transfer problems in Greek nursery and primary education.

In this paper we try to deepen more on the psychological aspects of transfer and on the difficulties that children face when starting compulsory schooling at the age of 5 1/2 and 6 1/2 years of age. We concentrate mainly on three questions: a) How children react both positively and negatively during the transition period and the first few weeks in primary school. b) To what extent the differences between the two settings (home or nursery school and primary school) create difficulties in children's school adjustment. c) What measures should be taken by parents and teachers to minimise adjustment problems of the children during the transition period.

For collecting research material we applied questionnaires to parents and teachers and a clinical approach to children of nursery school and first grade of primary school, (Statistical tables and iconic material will be projected by an overhead projector at the conference).

TEACHERS AS RESEARCHERS: THE POWER OF THE VIDEO CAMERA

Dr Carol Keyes, Pace University, White Plains, New York, USA

As an early childhood professional and teacher educator, the convergence of a commitment to improving teaching/learning, a strong interest in encouraging teacher-researchers, and an awareness of the importance of children's friendships resulted in a six month sabbatical study. The objectives of the pilot study were (1) to collect data on how children begin to make friendships in differently scheduled programs; (2) to identify criteria that support researcher/center collaboration; (3) to develop a research method for teachers to use easily in action-oriented classrooms. The researcher spent three days a month in four programs, videotaping children in thirteen classrooms with a small video camera. Subjects included new children, returnees who changed rooms, children who attended more than one program and children who appeared isolated. A room scan was taken every five to fifteen minutes and selected children were followed. An open observation system was used; patterns were identified as the tapes were organised and reviewed. Evaluations completed by teachers and directors at the end of the data collection period, when a portion of the raw data was shared, and when the centers received copies of all the raw data, were analyzed (1) to identify criteria that helps centers and researchers collaborate and (2) to ascertain teachers responses to the videos of their classroom and the opportunity to use a video camera for their own research. The primary focus of the presentation will be to illustrate the power of the small video camera for teacher-researchers to use in classroom research for professional development. Segments of the raw data and edited data will be shared as well as comments of teachers and directors. A brief review of pertinent literature concerning teachers and researchers, and children's friendships will also be shared.

AN EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING PRACTICE FOR THE STUDENTS OF THE SPECIALITY OF CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (0-6 YEARS) AT THE SCHOOL OF TEACHERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LAS PLAMAS

Eva Knallinsky, Escuela Universitaria de Formacion del Profesorado del Profesorado de Las Plamas, Espana

The early years education, today, is not considered as a pre-school preparatory phase for Primary Education but as an educative period from 0 to 6 years, with its own characteristics that needs a specific and specialised teaching staff. It is, at the same time, the starting point of a long process of teaching.

In our Teachers School of Las Palmas we have developed a new curriculum for the Early Years Education Speciality, that considers theoretical and practice training. Our students go on teaching practice in nursery schools from the first year. To assure direct and continuous supervision, we have joined to our professional team, two teachers with great experience in nursery school.

These teachers are familiar with the nursery schools of Las Palmas. They liaise with the teachers working in the schools for good classes for the students, they periodically visit the teachers and students on practice, organising tutorial meetings with the students and meeting the teachers to discuss and evaluate the student's work. At the start of the year the students choose a nursery school in which to do their teaching practice. The schools are chosen because they guarantee a quality apprenticeship.

During the year the students atte.. the nursery schools two mornings each week; Tuesday and Thursday. This enables them to experience real teaching based on living, thus allowing them to contrast this with theory. The teachers supervise the students, offer them their experience, resolve their doubts and help them in their teaching. At the same time the teachers have periodical contact with the coordination team of the Teacher's school. This team consists of a Professor coordinator of speciality, tutorial professors and teachers.

The students have to evaluate their work during the year. At the end of each year the students are evaluated by their tutorial teachers and the staff coordinators.

This is a brief summary of an experience which we are beginning in our school.

During my presentation I will explain, in detail, the new curriculum of Early Years Education and, more profoundly, this model of teaching practice which we are practising.

STYLES OF TALK BETWEEN YOUNG MAINSTREAM CHILDREN AND CLASSMATES WITH SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Dr Ann Lewis, University of Warwick

This paper reports research data collected as part of a wider series of studies investigating the nature of classroom interaction between primary aged children and pupils from schools for children with SLD (severe learning difficulties). The studies, spanning nine years, involved a range of schools and LEAs in the UK. All studies focused on interaction in structured link sessions in which it was intended by the teachers that the special and mainstream school pupils worked together on collaborative tasks.

The data reported here concern ten mainstream six to seven year olds, working in fortnightly 'integration' sessions with peers from a nearby school for children with SLD. Talk between the ten pairs of children was audio-recorded in these link sessions through one school year. These data are compared with findings from a parallel study in which three 12-14 year olds from a school for pupils with SLD were video-recorded when working collaboratively with ten year old mainstream pupils. These children were video-recorded each week during a term of weekly 'integration' sessions.

Quantitative analyses included mean length of utterance (MLUm), utterance function, and the use of reformulations and repetitions. Qualitative analyses focused on contrasting styles of dominance by the mainstream children.

The findings support seminal work by Shatz and Gelman (1973) indicating that young mainstream children are sensitive to the linguistic needs of the listener - even when, as here, the listeners are atypical and often unpredictable in their behaviour. The six to seven year old mainstream children were more persistent in trying to sustain communication and less tutorial in style than were the older mainstream children. It is suggested that this reflects the relative uncertainty of the younger mainstream children about the nature of SLD (see Lewis, 1993).

Reference

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RELATIONSHIP OF PLAY AND LANGUAGE PATTERNS AMONG SINGAPOREAN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN HOMES AND CLASSROOMS

Dr Swee Eng Audrey Lim, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

This paper reports the findings of a study to investigate the relationship between Singaporean preschool children's play and language patterns. Videotaped recordings of 116 four- to five- year old children in a standardised setting in their homes and classrooms were analysed using two play measures and five language measures. Data from questionnaires designed to obtain sociodemographic and background information on the sample children and their families, and data on parents' and teachers'/caregivers' attitudes towards general play behaviours and sociodramatic play were collected. The Caldwell Home Inventory for Preschool Aged children was administered in order to assess the extent to which the child's home environment supports cognitive development.

Analyses of parental data revealed positive attitudes towards child play and high involvement in children's play. Teachers valued play and expressed the belief that sociodramatic play was important for child development, especially for enhancing social skills. High Caldwell HOME scores revealed homogeneity in home environments for stimulating child learning and cognitive development. Few significant differences as a function of sex or SES were found. Correlational data demonstrated the utility of specific play and language measures and the need for a battery of linguistic or play measures. Higher levels of play and higher levels of language were correlated. A series of stepwise multiple regression analyses of the center play and home play and language scores demonstrated age to be best predictor of the play and language measures. Implications of the findings will be discussed in relation to issues of interest to parents and early childhood educators, and cross cultural researchers.

THE EFFECTS OF INTERACTIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILD'S IDENTITY FORMATION

Katarzyna Malkowicz, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland

This paper considers problem of sex-stereotyping parental behaviours to their 3-, 5- and 7 year old children in the context of a child's identity formation. Some researchers observed different parental styles of communication with their children in regard to child's sex. Mother's and father's responses to girls and boys differ extremely in periods of a child's psychosocial crises (in the meaning of acquiring new competences). Within sensitive periods of child's development parents tend to behave in sex-typed stereotypical way. We suggest that one of the important consequences of existing different patterns of child-parent interactions (particularly in periods mentioned above) are two paths of human identity formation: for girls and boys separately. The present study investigates dynamics and quality of parent-child interaction with regard to parent's and child's sex as well as child's age concurrent with normative developmental crises. The sample consists of 60 children: 3;0 - 5;11 years old (for each child two pairs of interaction - with mother and father). The analysis of interactions is carried out for various situations within 7 indices: content of message sending to the child' type of message; frequency and voice modulation, rate of speaking, complexity of verbal message; type of social control and motivation; child-parent distances; parent's posture; parent's facial expression; mutual child-parent position. Methods used in this study are: semi-structured questionnaire concerning situations of sex-stereoptying parental behaviours; video films recording dynamics and characteristics of parent-child interactions, children's drawings. Statistical analysis used in the study is ANOVA. The research simultaneously provides data about specific girls' and boys' areas of "interpersonal events" (taking place in the course of interactions) that contribute basic personal identity. At the moment, both conclusions about process of identity formation and child's identity expression take a form of initial intuitions.

NATIONAL FROEBEL FOUNDATION CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED STUDIES

Shirley Maxwell, Froebel College, Roehampton Institute, London, U.K.

Preamble

This paper outlines the work undertaken by students of Froebel College, Roehampton Institute, who have studied the newly-established *National Froebel Foundation Certificate in Advanced Studies*.

Froebel's philosophy - recognising each child as a unique being and an essential part of humanity, with rights and responsibilities according to his or her age and ability - led to the formation of principles which have profoundly affected the primary school curriculum over the years.

It is the specific function of the *Centre for Early Childhood Studies* at Roehampton Institute to act as guardian and critic of Froebel's educational philosophy. We believe that professional preparation and In Service training for work with young children deserves thorough recognition.

Presentation

Students of the national Froebel Foundation Advanced Certificate study three modules of the *Primary and Early Childhood* MA programme, which are as follows:

Young Children Learning, an exploration of contemporary research, requires students to take a critically reflective stance to current research and theoretical evidence.

The Pioneers of Early Childhood concerns the study of early pioneers of primary and early childhood education and draws heavily upon archive material in the *Early Childhood Collection* at Froebel College.

Early Childhood Curricula, the summative module, offers students the opportunity to generate their own curricular philosophy and practical implementation, incorporating aspects of contemporary research and views from pioneering educationists.

As a result of these studies students have been able to:

Sustain a philosophical, reflective appraisal of early childhood education
Develop an articulate, personal rationale for early childhood education
Explore the approaches toward the integration of theory with practice

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE HISTORY OF OMEP

Dr Vera Misurcova, Comenius Institute of Education of Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Czechoslovakia

The beginning of international cooperation resulting in the establishment of OMEP (abbreviation for Organisation mondiale pour l'education prescolaire, in English World Organisation for Early Childhood Education - WOECE) falls into the period after World War II; this period is characterized by the process of institutionalization - among others the institutionalization of international relations in such organizations as UNESCO, and the like. The paper will concentrate on the question in what way OMEP contributed to the development of international relations in the field of care and education of young children.

The first Conference of OMEP was held in Prague, August 26-28th, 1948, with the theme "Childhood and the World Community". It has been followed regularly in the course of biannial (later triannial) intervals by congresses with the topics Fundamental Needs of the Young Children, The Social Function of the Pre-school Establishments, and the like. The congresses, world assemblies, publications and other forms of international cooperation influenced members of OMEP to think internationally and to develop world-wide contacts; OMEP played a large part in a still growing recognition that the very early years are crucial to later educational growth; OMEP and its individual members gave help and support to the programme of UNESCO and to the programmes of non-governmental organizations.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was proclaimed in 1959. It has been followed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child in November 1989 and by the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and Plan of Action in September 1990. OMEP not only avowed their observance but it also used it as one of the basic starting points for its own activity. OMEP contributes to give life to this document and to implement children's rights on a national and international scale.

AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF RECENT RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Miss B B Mkhize: Principal and Organiser of Cebolenkosi Lutheran Pre-School and Day Care, Umlazi, South Africa

Introduction

This paper is on recent research and concepts of Early Childhood Education, findings and developments which arose, as well as problems and solutions.

When Early Childhood Education started in Umlazi parents and the community were not so enlightened as they are nowadays. Educators were there but were solely reliant on the Welfare Society and all rules were adjudicated by this Society who had a social worker administrating it. This was recently abandoned and the Senz Okuhle Project has taken over as a forum in Umlazi. What has been discovered to be prevalent now in the Community and its surroundings, as well as research from various papers given by various people in past conferences and papers is:-

Pre-school Forum

Due to black Townships' Pre-school problems, it has become a priority to etablish a forum pursuing stabilised Pre-school Education and conditions conducive to effective learning. These are determined by the successes of nominated Pre-school Councils. The population increase of formal and informal settlements has encouraged parents to play a key role in this and to act as reinforcement and support to development and educational achievements. Enlightened parents send their children to multi-racial schools and to a variety of agencies around.

The problems and findings now are that parents' unemployment and sanctions are affecting the progress of education financially. Schools' financial support has dropped and companies' funder support lessened. Good or bad performances result in formal schools and drop-outs occur in higher classes.

The Government's refusal to offer financial support to Early Learning causes drawbacks. It was found that Black Communities need to have stimulous provision to alleviate handicapped children. Motivation, determination, dedication by teachers is a priority. Financial support by funders must be deeply encouraged as well as Government aid to fund Pre-schools as a priority rather than primary Education. Trained expertise is needed to encourage effective learning in Early Childhood.

Solutions and suggestions to all this being -

Government to take initiatives to Early Childhood for all races. Early Childhood Education should be subsidized and cared for by the Government. Adequate facilities should be provided like equipment, buildings, financial support, improvised facilities and trained teachers for learning.

THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

Moira Morrison, Northern College, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

This course-related study set out to examine teachers' (course participants) understandings and perceptions of "the reflective practitioner" model offered in early education Diploma and Certificate professional development courses.

It investigated the extent to which the keeping of a professional journal (The Professional File) was perceived to influence the reflective process.

It looked at teachers' identification of factors that influence their ability to reflect and their commitment to do so.

The importance of course opportunities for engagement in dialogue and discussion and to experience collaborative work were highlighted by the study. It began to see this as a process of the teacher "finding her voice" as with others she explored her implicit theories and assumptions, and was able to identify what she knew- and to articulate what she knew she knew.

It was found that this process seemed to assist the move away from descriptive diary-type journal keeping to more discursive and thoughtful entries. As teachers gained awareness and insights into their teaching they engaged more in writing as a process of thinking and exploring. Narrative became another way of "finding voice" and of reflecting on practice.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE CONTEMPORARY KINDERGARTEN IN THE U.S.

Susan Nall, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, USA

Kindergarten education in the U.S. has a rich heritage. The roots date back to the influence of Froebel with an emphasis on play and to Susan Blow and her concern for the whole child. Comenius regarded early childhood and kindergarten as an inseparable part of education and society as a whole rather than a separate entity. His belief parallels the contemporary approach to kindergarten, as it is increasingly being viewed on a continuum in the educational process.

Significant societal and educational changes in the U.S. during the last two decades have influenced kindergarten education for five-year-olds. The American family structure has been effected by the increased divorce rate, the economy, and the increase in two-employed parents.

Education changes include a shift to an emphasis on standardized testing at all levels, accountability, and the incorporation of four-year-olds in public schools. The result has been a "spiraling down" of academic expectations.

In addition, schools are responding to the needs of demographic shifts in the nature of the population. Increasing numbers of children have multiculutural backgrounds and English is their second language.

These societal and educational changes have precipitated the movement to the all day kindergarten. As more and more schools offer an all day experience to kindergarten children, numerous issues surface that challenge the original purpose of kindergarten. Entrance age, screening practices, retention, commercial books and materials are all influencing the nature of the all day kindergarten.

The current focus in the U.S. on developmental appropriate practice places the emphasis on child-centered programs that utilize hands-on learning and attention to the development of the whole child. A strong parent education and involvement component, a rich environment, and a qualified teacher are components of a quality kindergarten program. These issues and trends will be discussed within the context of the historical perspective of kindergarten education. The results of a current and thorough literature review will be shared with participants.

TEACHERS WORK IN EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Pauline Newport, NSW, Australia

There is clear evidence from recent research and writing (Turney et al 1985, 1991) that the integration of theory and practice is a central issue in early childhood teacher education. There have been numerous strategies to address such integration, including critical reflection (eg. Zeichner, 1987; Calderheadm 1991; Smith, 1992) and that of modelling. One of the most powerful forms of modelling is that employing videotape episodes, vignettes and critical incidents (Posner, 1989) in early childhood settings. Carefully identified, selected and videotaped incidents can form an important basis for a range of learning activities in the training of Early Childhood Teachers.

The research project discussed in this paper, was begun in July 1992. Its purpose was to facilitate the careful identification, selection, and video recording of a series of critical teaching episodes/incidents in Early Childhood Settings. The settings employed included a Long Day Care Centre (0-3 years), a Pre-School (3-5 years) and K-2 school (5-8 years) in Syndey NSW Australia. The filmed incidents were edited and a teaching video was produced designed for use in teacher training institutions for early childhood student teachers. The video is accompanied by teaching notes and questions to facilitate a critical and reflective approach to the discussion of a range of issues dealing with teaching in Australian Early Childhood settings.

The paper provides a theoretical framework for this study and examples from the videotapes episodes across the three early childhood settings will demonstrate how such materials can be used to promote more effective teaching and learning in Early Childhood Teacher Education.

THE EFFECTS OF THEMATIC FANTASY PLAY ON THE PERSPECTIVE-TAKING ABILITY OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Carolyn Niam-Tan, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

This study primarily examined the effects of thematic fantasy play on the perspective-taking ability of preschool children. A secondary investigation addressed the effects of thematic fantasy play on the free play behaviour of young children.

The central hypothesis for the study was that training in thematic fantasy play would improve young children's performance on a battery of perspective-taking tasks. It was also hypothesized that training in thematic fantasy play would significantly increase the incidence of fantasy play in free play sessions.

Based on the pretest-posttest control group design, two intact classes (n=27) of a private kindergarten were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: thematic fantasy play training and control. In the experimental group, the children were exposed to a curriculum of thematic fantasy play using role enactment of fairy tales such as Henny Penny and The Three Little Pigs. After telling the stories, the teacher guided the children in the re-enactment of the fairy tales. The children were involved in thematic fantasy play for twelve 30-minute sessions over the course of five weeks.

Children in the control group followed the routine curriculum of the school i.e. they were read fairy tales following which they discussed the stories with the teacher. Both groups spent the same amount of time with their teachers.

All 54 children (mean age = 5.0 years) were pretestted and posttested on measures representing the three areas of perceptual , cognitive and affective perspective-taking. The three sets of perspective-taking tasks were adapted from various sources (Falvell et al, 1968; Borke, 1971; Fishbein et al, 1972; and Kurdek & Rodgon, 1975) in the literature and modified for use with Singaporean children. The free play behaviour of the subjects were also observed.

Results of analysis of covariance indicated that subjects in the thematic fantasy play condition performed significantly better than those in the control group on total and perceptual perspective-taking measures ($p < .05$). Children in the experimental group also performed better than those in the control group on the cognitive perspective-taking measure although there was no significant difference. No significant effects were found on the affective perspective-taking task. In addition, chisquare analyses indicated that changes in free play behaviour was significant for the experimental group ($p < .05$).

The main findings of the study indicate that thematic fantasy play applied to preschool classrooms can produce beneficial effects for perspective-taking ability. These were discussed in terms of their practical implications for curriculum design and teacher training. It was suggested that the use of thematic fantasy play as a preschool instructional strategy would provide for a more developmentally appropriate curriculum. Further research to ascertain the permanency of play effects was recommended.

THE PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY ATTITUDES AND RELATIONS IN SIX YEAR OLD CHILDREN

Assistant Professor Dr Esra Omeroglu, Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey

There are many factors that are having an influence on the development of socialization. First of all, the child's social and emotional development is influenced by the home environment and the attitudes of the parents. In the creation of the research study, it was composed of all the six year old children attending kindergartens. The sampling was composed of forty children attending two laboratory kindergartens. Family Attitudes Test was used in this research with the objective of measuring the perception of family attitudes and relations in six year old children. The results of the research will be discussed at the presentation.

DRAWING AS PART OF LEARNING

Francisca Gallardo Otero, University College of Teaching Training, Cordoba, Espana

The present tendencies in the teaching of drawing are primarily orientated towards perceptive and creative values, visual language or aesthetic values in creative, expressive or artistic terms.

In strictly pedagogical and interdisciplinary terms, education through drawing can produce the most interesting experiences. "The creation of artistic forms requires the use of judgement, perception, ingenuity and will; in a word intelligence: this seems to have escaped the notice of those responsible for the present state of education" (Eisner, 1987).

The principal problem is as follows:
To what extent is the visual system programmed in the group of processes of development in early infancy, thus genetically determining the "fixed" mechanisms by which we interpret the particular visual field we meet? According to Sir Russell Brain (1960), perceptions are the receiving of information from the outside world which the nervous system deals with in the form coded electrical impulses. In addition, concepts can be based on others which were previously held.

The experiment of Blakemore and Cooper in which stimuli of vertical and horizontal fields caused subsequent neuro-physiological responses in animals' brains proves that the special visual conditions in which they were reared had an important effect on the development of their "visual cortices".

We can draw the following conclusion:
An education rich in numerous and diverse visual experiences imparted while the visual system is developing with sufficient flexibility to acquire and express stimuli in graphic terms, will increase students' learning capacity.

Through drawing we can add to the established values as a means towards learning fundamental values in the educational process, above all in infant education.

NURSERY TEACHERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN GREECE

Theodora Papatheodorou/Arlene Ramasut, School of Education, UWCC

A comparative study of professionals working with children in various western Europe countries (Lawrence and Steed, 1984) revealed a commonly held belief that an increasing number of young children are displaying behaviour problems in both early school years and the pre-school years. This view is also supported by the work of Laing and Chazan (1987) in U.K. Richman et al (1982) and Egeland et al (1990) further comment that early onset behaviour problems at pre-school level tend to persist into the formal school years.

While some researchers argue that early identification of behaviour problems is difficult and potentially detrimental to the child (Chazan and Laing, 1985; Beiley, 1989) they and others (Asby, 1978; McGuire et al, 1991) also support the view that early screening facilitate early intervention.

This study was undertaken in Greece to establish whether nursery teachers there were of the same opinion as professionals in other countries. A questionnaire developed in an earlier study (Papatheodorou, 1990) was applied to a female teacher sample of 154, selected from nursery schools in cities, small towns and rural areas in three distinct geographic locations in Greece. The total sample of pupils in the study was 3.091 (boys N:1,568, girls N:1.523).

The overall prevalance rate identified by teachers for all behaviour problems was 14.3 percent, with 2.1 percent perceived as very serious and 5.8 percent serious and very serious. More boys than girls were perceived to have behaviour problems, in general, (ratio 2:1) and in the acting-out behaviours in particular. However, almost equal percentage of boys and girls were perceived to be seriously withdrawn. Children's gender was found to be a significant variable for acting-out and withdrawn behaviours at .0001 level, but not for developmentally related problems. Age (younger group 3 1/2 - 5, older group 5 - 6 1/2) was found to be a significant variable for acting-out behaviours only, at .05 level, and academic achievement was significant variable across all three types of behaviour problems at .05 level. Social class, however, was not found to be a significant variable. Teachers' experience was found to be significant in relation to perception of withdrawn problems but not in relation to acting-out or developmentally related problems.

Overall, the main findings of this study were remarkably consistent with the findings of other studies. Teachers, wherever they are, appear to identify similar behaviours as being problematic to themselves or to the child, and to agree on overall prevalance rates and gender differences. Early onset behaviour problems would appear to be as prevalent in Greece as in other Western European countries. Further examination of the data will reveal management strategies used by the nursery teachers in dealing with the identified behaviour problems.

CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSFORMATION AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIES USED IN PROBLEM SOLVING

Dr Pamela Sharpe, National Institute of Education, Singapore

A number of studies have reported the importance of structured activity in early childhood settings for the intellectual development of young children. Environments which are materials-rich, and experiences which are stimulating and challenging are reported to be the most conducive. This study is an attempt to show that such programmes are only as effective as the interdependence between the adult characteristics and the kinds of experiences and activities provided and these are shown to be crucial. In particular, the study attempts to show that developmentally appropriate activity, where the child is encouraged to discover solutions and justify his actions, must be accompanied by opportunities for the child to reflect on his thought in order to either confirm his beliefs, or enable him to modify or change these. It is clear from research into the collaborative role of the adults, that the warmth of the interaction is another crucial factor in eliciting responses from children. Above all, such collaboration, it is claimed, should involve activities such as questioning, correcting errors, and providing experiences involving answering questions about the games, stories, constructions tasks, and other problem solving tasks presented to them. An initial examination of the children's responses revealed that the role of the tutor in eliciting informative responses from the children relied significantly on the kinds of questions and the order in which they were asked. A further extension of the study, involving an analysis of the kinds of experiences found to be most appropriate in challenging children's problem solving strategies is in progress and will be reported. It is anticipated that the results of these analyses and their prescriptions will be useful to teachers and parents in both understanding more clearly just how children solve problems, and, how they make sense of their experiences, especially with collaborative adults.

PRESSURES ON PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM FROM THE STATUTORY SECTOR CURRICULUM IN THE UK

Iram Siraj-Blatchford, University of Warwick, UK

This paper will focus largely on a study (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, Johnson, 1992) carried out in three U.K. regions which looked at how the recently implemented National Curriculum was impacting on the pre-school curriculum and the consequent effects for teachers, children and parents. The paper highlights the differential effects upon education and social services pre-school provision and questions the academic start young children get across these provisions. Special emphasis is placed on the pressures to change curriculum content, assessment processes and communication with parents. There is some critical analysis of the UK pre-school system and the UK National Curriculum at Key Stage One, 'Level One' in English, Maths and Science. The paper ends with some reflections on the positive and negative effects of some of the "top-down" pressures from schools to pre-schools.

CONSTRUCTING DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE EARLY YEARS

John Siraj-Blatchford, Westminster College

This paper argues that a pedagogic model grounded in both constructivist and Vygotskyian theory can be consistently applied in early years Design and Technology education. The constructivist model outlined, is borrowed form the work of Rosalind Driver and applies a perspective grounded in Piaget and moderated by Ausubel. This perspective involves a clear recognition that: ***"The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows"***. This argument is extended further to cover the acquisition of scientific, design and technological ***capabilities***. The paper focuses on how effective learning is achieved when new understandings are related to appropriate existing concepts and cognitive structures. Vygotsky's conception of the 'zone of proximal development' is utilised to show how cognitive functions that have not yet matured and which the child is unable to apply independently, can be productively applied, with the assitance of an educator.

Child development is, from this perspective, dependent upon existing competencies, knowledge and understandings being challenged and extended with support, it is argued however, that it is essential that the challenges are not so great or irrelevant that the child experiences failure. The implications of allowing individuals to experience educational failure is widely apparent in the context of science and technology throughout our society. The role of 'play' in the early years is seen as crucial in this context. From this perspective the essential task for the teacher must be to clearly identify the limits of proximal development and to restrict as far as possible their teaching to this zone. The identification of such limits demands an appreciation of 'progression' within the learning context.

The paper argues that the structure of the attainment targets within the UK Design and Technology National Curriculum provides teachers with a framework of "constructive scaffolding" within which children may be given the maximum freedom and autonomy while developing their practical capability in designing and making. This heuristic framework may be lost in the application of the new proposals for Design and Technology.

It is argued that the educational principles described are of relevance to early years education more generally and that they serve, to some degree, to resolve what are often seen as two mutually exclusive educational paradigms.

LEARNING TO READ: INITIATIVES IN EARLY READING IN ANDRHA PRADESH (S. INDIA) AND PUNJAB DISTRICT (PAKISTAN)

Dr Brigid Smith, Homerton College, Cambridge

Education projects in Southern India and Pakistan (APPEP and PEDEP III), funded by the ODA through the British Council and World Bank and the European Community, have as their focus the shift of the curriculum from a route learning of text books to an active, experiential and child centred curriculum. The drop out rate from education is particularly high from Class 1.

Learning to read is seen as learning complex letter shapes in a de-contextualised way which does not build on early language experiences. Class 1 children are not exposed to texts in any form until they have mastered letter formations. Further reading is often learning of the text books.

Book materials are almost non existent in public schools however there are language resources available to teachers at little or no cost and once they have experienced using these materials they are enthusiastic and inventive.

The ubiquitous "action song" is a popular element in early education, enjoyed by both teachers and children. Encouraging teachers to produce a written version of the action song to be learned has given access to a text right from the earliest time in school. Common rhyme and letter patterns in the songs have been identified and highlighted and children have shown that they can quickly identify these written elements in the text.

Versions of stories derived from pictures and told to the teacher for writing down have resulted in simple Big Books being used for shared reading with children in Class 1. Teachers have been surprised at how detailed and accurate these children's drawings can be.

Encouraging examples of this approach to early reading are now being seen in some classrooms and Inset work includes these approaches to learning to read.

PSYCHOLOGY, TEACHERS AND THE EARLY YEARS

Jonathan Solity, University of Warwick

Psychology is one of the disciplines that has informed the teaching and learning process in the early years. Much of the psychology to which teachers have been introduced has been concerned exclusively with children and various aspects of their development. Those drawing upon psychological theories have attempted to show how children typically develop, so that teachers have some idea of how children might be expected to behave and learn in the classroom. This emphasis has helped to create for those working in the early years, notions of what is 'normal development' and what is not normal.

Until fairly recently psychology has rarely been viewed as a body of knowledge that can be used refelctively, as a way of providing teachers with frameworks for considering the impact of their own personal histories on their role in the classroom. Teachers who are not aware of either their own motives for teaching, or the reasons behind their own teaching styles and choice of methods, are unlikely to be successful in meeting children's educational needs.

This presentation will:

* undertake a critical review of the research underpinning the psychology typically presented to teachers of young children,
* explore the ways in which this has served to limit children's learning opportunities, limit their development, and ultimately lay the foundations of discriminative practice,
* consider alternative psychological perspectives that enable early years teachers to become more effective and sensitive in promoting children's learning and social development,
* examine the research basis for these alternative perspectives,
* consider the reasons why teachers might be resistant to accepting a more reflective, interpersonal psychological perspective on teaching young children,
* examine the implications of alternative psychological research methodologies for teachers in the early years, the teaching and learning process and children's development.

SPATIAL CONCEPTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Patricia Thorpe, Macquarie University, Waverley, NSW, Australia

This presentation looks at how young children learn basic geometrical concepts. Piaget's developmental levels will be examined to determine how they fit into the current research project. These will be compared with materials from the Soviet States that has recently become available from the NCTP in the USA.

The research project was constructed in a number of early childhood centres in a variety of socio-economic areas. All of these centres had an early intervention program in operation so that special needs or "exceptional" children could be observed along with mainstream children.

The researcher is investigating children's learning styles to determine the children's preferred learning styles when exploring spatial concepts. The question of whether exceptional children progress through the same stages and in the same order as the mainstream children is also being considered.

Spatial concepts in early childhood is an area that seems to have been neglected by researchers in favour of the development of number concepts. This research project aims to add to our knowledge of how young children learn spatial concepts.

ADAPTING MULTIVOCAL ETHNOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN DENMARK AND THE UNITED STATES

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Presenter: Dr Judith Wagner

Applications of ethnigraphic research methodology in educational settings have been discussed at length (Dorr-Bremme, 1985 a and b), as has been the value of ethnographic data for clarifying the nature of teaching-learning interactions in the classroom (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). Adaptations of a technique called "multivocal ethnography" (Clifford, 1983, Conner, Asch and Asch, 1986, Ruby, 1982; and Tobin, Wu, and Davidson, 1989) have been successfully employed in an ongoing study of early education in Denmark and the United States (Vilien and Wagner, 1990).

To determine the extent to which Danish and American educators agree upon what constitutes "developmentally appropriate" practice in early childhood education, the investigators designed a questionnaire. The questionnaire focused upon essential and distinguishing features of the developmental approach as defined by NAEYC (1988), which was assumed to represent the American definition. Results of the questionnaire, completed orally and/or in writing by approximately 25 Danish teachers, parents, administrators, and teacher educators, suggest that Danes and Americans strongly agree on all but two key indicators of developmental appropriateness.

Further evidence of theoretical/rhetorical agreement comes from a review of textbooks. It appears that early childhood teacher education programs in the two countries cover the same theorists, rely heavily upon the work of Piaget, and focus on similar developmental issues. American texts appear to include more pedagogical details, which Danes often view as too prescriptive. For example, American texts often detail how materials should be arranged and how teachers should respond to specific classroom situations.

Multivocal ethnography as described by Tobin, Wu and Davidson (1989) involves, first, recording classroom observations on videotape. Next, researchers generate a "second reflexive level of discourse" as they videotape the teacher describing and analyszing instructional practices captured on the original classroom video. A "third reflexive level of discourse" is created when researchers videotape someone else, such as the school principal or an observer from another school, commenting not only on the original classroom video, but also on the teacher's response to it. Each successive level of reflexive discourse provides additional insights and perspectives.

Vilien and Wagner modified the technique described by Tobin et al to (1) eliminate interference caused by video equipment in the classroom; and (2) reduce logistical complications of videotaping, such as set-up time, protection of privacy, and variations in equipment from country to country; and (3) reduce costs. The study compares

Danish and American theory and practice on variables associated with program quality, such as philosophy, curriculum design, and teacher preparation.

The investigators examine both the rhetoric and reality of education and child care in Denmark and the United States. After establishing that Danes and Americans generally agree on the essential characteristics and distinguishing features of developmental practice (Vilien and Wagner, 1990), the investigators observed early childhood classroom settings in both countries and generated several "reflexive levels of discourse" (Tobin, et al, 1989) by discussing their observations with the teachers, program administrators, teachers from other schools, and teacher educators. Each successive level of reflexive discourse provides additional insights and perspectives.

Given similarity in theory and rhetoric on characteristics of high quality programming, one might expect greater similarlity in classroom practice, despite differences in cultural context. The investigators continue to examine classroom practices in the two countries, particularly for their implications for teacher education. For instance, Danish and American educators strongly agree that children learn many important academic skills through play. However, Danish educators schedule more time daily for free play.

This presentation includes a discussion of differences in the application of developmental principles in the two countries and of related cultural variables. Further, it includes a discussion of the impact of the study upon the investigators' ongoing work with children and in teacher education.

Among the conclusions of the study is that modified multivocal ethnography holds considerable potential for further use in cross-cultural studies in early childhood settings.

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THE INVISIBILITY OF THE 'AVERAGE' PUPIL IN THE EARLY YEARS

Dr Stephen Waterhouse, University of Stirling, U.K.

A four year investigation into the career patterns of children in early schooling suggests that children quickly acquire one of two identities: either **normal** or **deviant**. Once a child is categorised or typed it seems teachers are reluctant to change their mind about a pupil's real identity. So the first few encounters in episodes of classroom life are apparently critical for children. Labelling and self-fulfilling prophecy theories have frequently suggested how teacher expectations, typifications and predictions may shape children's experience of schooling. Do teachers in the early years have a potential for greater influence on the identity of a child? As in other studies of schooling there are indications of social processes akin to labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy. While there have been many studies looking at 'before' and 'after' effects of labelling and self-fulfilling prophecies, there have been fewer studies which document the day-by-day processes in between. Research based on continuous monitoring of a sample of children in the early years reveals some of the social psychological processes involved. Perhaps the most striking finding relates to the position of '**average**' pupils. Whereas the deviant pupil is outstanding and continually noticeable, the conformist pupil is apparently less visible to teachers. Some pupils appear to conform to an extreme degree with the result that they become 'invisible'. Is this an anomaly for teachers in the early years when, in spite of a commitment to individualism, and perhaps even child-centredness, it seems teachers may be 'blind' to the 'average' child?

CREATING INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

Barbara Watson, Auckland College of Education, New Zealand

The intention of this study was to describe the nature and incident of independent learning among school beginners in selected classrooms in Auckland and to then explore teacher-child interactions for evidence of the ways teachers promoted and supported independent learning in those classrooms.

Systematic observation in two classrooms was used to identify all forms of independent learning in children and the associated facilitative teacher behaviours over the whole five days on children's entry to school and three months later.

Six categories of child directed acts identified behaviour from which independent learning could be inferred. Each category of teacher behaviour that was deemed to facilitate independent learning in children was developed in association with each of the six categories of child directed acts.

The children generated a considerable amount of independent learning on entry to school and three months later. Many facilitative teaching acts occurred in the interactive style that occurred in all aspects of the curriculum.

The teachers spent a considerable portion of teaching time in one-to-one teaching situations and in small groups, encouraging children's responses and generally fostering and supporting independence in their learning. There was some difference observed between teachers in the attention given to different categories and in the nature of the facilitative behaviour occurring in one-to-one interactions and small group teaching interactions.

Resulting from this descriptive study is a definition of independent learning in children and its elaboration into categories of child directed acts and associated categories of facilitative teacher behaviours. A way of teaching emerges that differs from teaching characterised as a didactic, more traditional form of instruction. The two teachers typically followed the children's agenda as they fostered and supported independent learning in them. The definition and categories provide a suitable basis for further study of what is allegedly a different way of teaching school beginners.